

Daniel has taught more than 150 youths not only the physical techniques of Taekwondo, but also self-discipline, confidence, respect, and integrity.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor Daniel Edmondson for his volunteer activities. His being recognized at the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards is truly a great accomplishment. I applaud his efforts and wish him the best with his future endeavors.

HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROMOTION ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2006

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4157) to amend the Social Security Act to encourage the dissemination, security, confidentiality, and usefulness of health information technology:

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Chairman, I believe there is great potential in the widespread adoption of health information technology. By expanding the use of health information technology, we can reduce medical errors, improve the quality of care and patient safety, enhance efficiency and significantly reduce health care costs.

However, the bill before us fails to make any progress toward greater adoption of health information technology.

H.R. 4157 fails to provide for the development or adoption of interoperability standards. It also fails to provide adequate funding to assist providers transitioning to an electronic medical records system, and it greatly weakens Medicare's fraud and abuse laws.

The RAND Corporation recently estimated that by implementing health information technology, we can save as much as \$162 billion per year. Unfortunately, H.R. 4157 accomplishes so little that we would fail to yield any of these potential savings.

The most troubling aspect of this bill is its failure to protect an individual's medical privacy.

Even the President of the United States, believes an individual's medical information should be protected. On January 27, 2005, the President stated, "I presume I'm like most Americans—I think my medical records should be private." And on May 22, 2006, the President stated, "Our goal, by the way, is for every American to have an electronic medical record. And—but, by the way, with a guarantee of privacy."

During the committee process, Mr. DOGGETT and I offered an amendment that would have strengthened privacy protections for individuals. Specifically, the amendment: (1) expressly recognized the right of an individual to privacy and security; (2) required individuals to consent to having their information shared; (3) allowed individuals to prohibit access to particularly sensitive information in their health record (i.e., HIV, mental health, genetic information); (4) required individuals to be notified if their health record has been breached, and (5) allowed individuals to obtain damages from an entity that wrongfully uses or discloses identifiable health information.

Unfortunately, our Republican colleagues did not share these goals and voted against these provisions on numerous occasions. Yesterday, we joined our colleagues from the Energy and Commerce Committee and offered a similar amendment again before the Rules Committee. The amendment was blocked there as well.

As we move forward on health information technology, it is absolutely essential that an individual's most personal and vulnerable information is protected. In a digital environment, HIPPA is just not enough.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly believe in the potential of health information technology. Unfortunately, I cannot support the legislation before us because it fails to truly make any progress in achieving that goal.

CONGRESS SHOULD UPDATE CREDIT UNION REGULATIONS AND IMPROVE RULES FOR CREDIT CARDS

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 28, 2006

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, we all recognize the importance of the financial services industry—including both banks and credit unions—to our economy. I support and applaud the steps both have taken toward better services and improved products.

However, I think there's a need to change some of the rules involving credit cards and I also think we need to remember the need for diversity in the industry. That's why I am cosponsoring H.R. 2317, to update the regulation of credit unions, and have introduced a bill dealing with credit cards.

The last major changes to the Federal Credit Union Act were in 1998, and since then there has been time to identify unnecessary and outdated provisions and develop legislation that would make common sense improvements.

That is the background for H.R. 2317, the Credit Union Regulatory Improvements Act (or "CURIA"), introduced by our colleagues, Representatives ED ROYCE and PAUL E. KANJORSKI. It combines a series of regulatory enhancements that will allow credit unions to operate more effectively and efficiently. These changes can help improve productivity and efficiency in a competitive and dynamic marketplace, and will translate into better and lower-cost service to credit union members.

The current bill improves upon similar bipartisan legislation introduced in the 108th Congress, and its broad support is shown by the fact that it has no fewer than 121 cosponsors. That support reflects the reality that credit unions—with 87 million members nationwide and 1.5 million just in Colorado—provide choice in the financial services industry.

My support for credit unions does not mean hostility to banks, because I do not think credit unions represent a threat to the continued success of banks. Credit unions remain member-owned not-for-profit institutions directed by volunteer boards that pool their resources to help each other. And while credit unions have changed and grown, that has not prevented banks from growing as well. In 2005, bank profits reached a record level of \$134.2 billion.

Banks have a 94% share of the financial services industry, holding more than \$10 trillion in assets. In fact, the net growth in bank assets in 2005—\$626 billion—was nearly as much as the combined total assets of all credit unions in the country while one of the biggest banks has assets that exceed the \$669 billion in assets held by all the credit unions.

In view of these realities, I am not persuaded that the modest changes in credit union regulation included in CURIA represent a real threat to the continued success of the banking industry—and there is no doubt they can and will benefit consumers.

Similarly, consumers will benefit from the common-sense changes in the rules governing issuance of credit cards that would be accomplished by enacting H.R. 5383, the Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act, which I introduced earlier this year.

That bill reflects the reality that Congress needs to do more to promote responsibility by those who provide credit, beginning with credit card companies. Like a similar (but not identical) bill introduced by Senator DODD, my bill takes some simple, common-sense steps to stop abusive practices, educate cardholders, and stiffen the penalties for violations.

I hope that when we return in September, the House will have an opportunity to consider both H.R. 2317, the Credit Union Regulatory Improvements Act, and H.R. 5383, the Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO MARTIN TAGGART

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 28, 2006

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Martin L. Taggart as he retires from a distinguished career as a coach and an educator at Moapa Valley High School.

Marty Taggart grew up in Afton, Wyoming. He graduated from Southern Utah University with a major in Physical Science and Health and minors in both Math and Botany. During college, Taggart played 4 years of football and spent his summers as a forest ranger.

Marty has been a beloved teacher in Moapa Valley for the past 35 years. When he began his career, Moapa Valley High School served all of the students in Moapa Valley from Kindergarten through 12th Grade. Marty spent the first 13 years of his career teaching junior high school math, science and physical education. However, he has spent the majority of his career teaching at the high-school level. In addition to math, science and physical education, Taggart has taught health, careers, and weight training while at Moapa Valley High School.

Although he has been an incredibly committed educator, perhaps his most memorable contributions to Moapa Valley High School are those he made while coaching football and wrestling. Coach Taggart founded the wrestling program in Moapa Valley and has been the driving force behind its expansion and success over the past 31 years. He has also spent the past 33 years coaching football at Moapa Valley High School. Both teams have been very competitive and enjoyed many successes as a result of Coach Taggart's dedicated leadership.